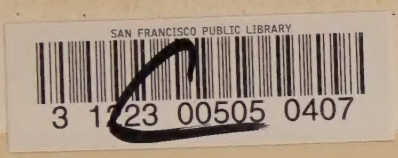
PROCEEDINGS
OF
TOWN MEETING
AT
STERLING, MASSACHUSETTS
JULY 14, 1919

PRESENTATION OF PORTRAIT
OF
LORD STIRLING

BOOK NO.	ACCESSION
974.4 St45	163330

Form 16—20M—5-9-21—C. P.



SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY

Careful usage of books is expected, and any injury or loss is to be paid for by the borrower. A fine of five cents will be imposed for each day or fraction thereof that this book is kept overtime.

SEE DATE WHEN DUE BELOW

Form No. 11—12-3 21·20M

Lord Stirling

3 1223 00505 0407

PROCEEDINGS

of

TOWN MEETING

at

STERLING, MASS.

JULY 14
1919

S. P. Public Library

Presentation of Portrait
of Lord Stirling

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Photogravure of Portrait of Lord Stirling presented to Town of Stirling by Miss Mary E. Butterick . . . Frontispiece

Warrant for Town Meeting 3

Motion, H. P. Kendall 6

Letter of Gift of Portrait of Lord Stirling, Miss Mary E. Butterick 7

Unveiling of Portrait, Miss Mabel Elizabeth Butterick 9

Song, Marseillaise 10

Address, Arthur P. Rugg 12

Song, America, The Beautiful 65

Motion, John A. Davis 67

Vote of Acceptance 67

Motion, Rev. F. T. Crane 67

Vote of Thanks 68

Song, The Star Spangled Banner . . . 69

Adjournment 70

Bibliography Concerning Lord Stirling . . 71

Sterling, Mass.,
July 14, 1919,
8 o'clock P. M.

TOWN MEETING

The meeting is called to order by the Moderator, Mr. George F. Butterick.

Moderator: The Clerk will read the Warrant.

Town Clerk Jacob W. Longley: "Town Warrant: Worcester, ss. To Jacob W. Longley, Warrant Officer, or either of the Constables in the Town of Sterling, Greeting:

"In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you are directed to notify the inhabitants of the Town of Sterling, qualified to vote in Elections and Town affairs, to meet at the Town Hall in said

Sterling, on Monday, the 14th day of July, A.D. 1919, at 7.30 o'clock in the evening, then and there to act on the following article, viz.:

"Article I. To see if the Town will vote to accept the gift of a portrait of Lord Stirling, for whom the Town was named, or act in any way relative thereto.

"And you are directed to serve this Warrant by posting up attested copies thereof, one at the Town Hall and one at the Post Office at Sterling and Sterling Junction in said town, ten days at least before the time of holding said meeting.

"Hereof fail not, and make due return of this Warrant, with your doings thereon, to the Town Clerk, at the time and place of meeting as aforesaid.

"Given under our hands this second day of July, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and nineteen.

"GEORGE F. BUTTERICK,
"CHARLES F. ADAMS,
"JOHN A. DAVIS,
"Selectmen of Sterling.

"A true copy, attest:
"JACOB W. LONGLEY,
"Warrant Officer."

Moderator: Is there any action proceeding from Article I?

Mr. H. P. Kendall: I move that gentlemen present at this meeting, who are not residents of the Town, be granted the privilege of speaking.

(Motion carried)

Arthur P. Rugg: Mr. Moderator, I have been asked to read the following letter:

"To the Town of Sterling:

"The Town of Sterling was named for one of the heroes of the revolutionary war. His military career was most creditable. His ardent patriotism is emphasized by his noble lineage. The portrait of Lord Stirling, recently painted by the accomplished artist, Miss Eleanor C. Bannister, based on the portrait of him in Independence Hall, is presented to the town of Sterling as a token of my abiding interest both in the town and in its name. It is a happy coincidence that the date of its presentation falls on the national holiday of France. With her soldiers Lord Stirling fought as comrade in arms for the achievement of our existence as a nation. She is again our ally. Her contribution to civiliza-

tion in the present great war has made all the future her debtor.

"July 14, 1919.

"MARY E. BUTTERICK,

"406 Franklin Avenue,

"Brooklyn, N. Y."

Moderator: The portrait will now be unveiled by Miss Mabel Elizabeth Butterick.

(Portrait unveiled)

MARSEILLAISE

(Sung by chorus under the direction of Miss Christine E. Burpee)

Ye sons of France, awake to glory!
Hark! Hark! what myriads bid you rise!
Your children, wives, and grandsires hoary,
Behold their tears and hear their cries!
Behold their tears and hear their cries!
Shall hateful tyrants, mischief breeding,
With hireling hosts, a ruffian band,
Affright and desolate the land,
While peace and liberty lie bleeding?
To arms, to arms, ye brave! Th' avenging sword unsheathe!
March on, march on! all hearts resolved on victory or death.

Moderator: We will now listen to an address by Hon. Arthur P. Rugg.

Address by
ARTHUR P. RUGG

Mr. Moderator and Friends:

No gathering of American people on the fourteenth of July can fail first to pay a tribute of affection and respect to the republic of France. Most of us learned last year for the first time that the fourteenth of July is the national holiday of France. Then all over this country celebrations were held on that date in honor of our gallant ally. The dominant note of those meetings, the moving spirit of America twelve months ago, was one of courage and greeting in a common cause, a cause which we all had faith to believe would triumph, but which in that hour we had no certain demonstration would eventuate in our victory.

Today we meet to celebrate a victory won, the greatest victory for the cause of human freedom that the history of armed conflict has known.

As you will recall, the fourteenth of July is Bastille Day. It is cherished in France because on the fourteenth of July there fell the castle—the prison—of the Bastille. Nothing could mark more pointedly the difference between the people of the United States and the people of France than the source and nature of our two national holidays. The Fourth of July denotes the Declaration of Independence. It signifies a formal statement of the principles on which we believe the future government of mankind depends. It was a declaration of the purpose of all the

people to rule and to be secure in certain inalienable rights and a declaration that these principles are the only principles on which the race can progress.

Bastille Day, on the contrary, means chiefly a creation of the imagination. The Bastille was a prison. It typified to the French people the despotism of the kings under whose heels their fair country had been ground for centuries. The destruction of the Bastille was the work of a mob. The deaths which came on that day resulted from the broken word of the officer at the head of that mob. Although he had given his pledge of honor that no blood should be shed, blood flowed almost like water in the streets of Paris on that first fourteenth of July. Yet that

day has been seized upon by the imagination of the French people and spiritualized as the emblem of freedom and equality and fraternity, and of release from despotism. I believe it would have been impossible for the children of the Puritans to have transformed such an event and to have idealized it and made it a national holiday significant of the aspirations of a great nation. The day on which the Bastille fell has become the national holiday of France.

France was our ally in the revolution. We would have had a far harder struggle to have achieved our independence but for the aid of the armies of France. And the service which she rendered to us at that time is embodied and envisaged in the name of one man. We scarcely ever recall

Rochambeau or De Grasse, but we always think of Lafayette. It was his name more than any other which aroused the American people toward sympathy and ultimate alliance with France in this recent titanic struggle now drawing to its close. This war has disclosed depths of endurance and shown heights of heroism among the French people, the existence of which we in America had scarcely dreamed. They have not only manifested dauntless courage but they have borne sufferings untold with a spirit of hopefulness which has electrified mankind. We now know the French people not only as lovers of art and patrons of literature, but we know them as willing to suffer to the last drop of blood of the last Frenchman of France in defense of country

and to suffer with a smile and a cheer. That spirit has magnified France in the eyes of the world. It has especially endeared the people of France to the people of America.

I ask your indulgence while I read a few lines of tribute which Theodore Roosevelt only a short time before his death paid to France:

"France embodies all of loveliness and all of valor. Beauty is her handmaiden and strength her shield bearer, and the shining courage of her daughters has matched the courage of her dauntless sons. For three and a half terrible years she has walked light of heart through the valley of the shadow. Her body is in torture, but her forehead is alight with the beauty of the morning. Never in all history has there been such a stead-

fast loyalty in the doing of dangerous duty, such devotion to country, such splendor of service and of sacrifice, and great shall be her reward, for she has saved the soul of the world."

On this day in Paris there has been the Parade of Victory. For the first time since the shame of France in 1871, when the legions of Germany trampled her under foot, soldiers have been marching under the Arc de Triomphe. Our fellow countrymen, our brothers, our own flesh and blood, under the Stars and Stripes, have joined with the Allies of France and Great Britain in celebrating the victory of civilization over barbarism by this day marching under the Arch of Triumph. This day will be memorable in the annals of the international

relations of France and the United States.

There is peculiar appropriateness for us here in Sterling to be able to honor Lord Stirling, for whom our town was named, on this fourteenth of July. He was associated with Lafayette. He was a comrade in arms with Rochambeau and with De Grasse. And, therefore, it is most fitting that we should celebrate on this day the presentation of this beautiful portrait of the man for whom this town was named.

The query naturally comes to the mind of a New Englander, "How do we know that the town of Sterling was named for Lord Stirling?" He spelled his name "Stirling," and we have for one hundred and forty years spelled our town name with an "e"

instead of the first "i." Doubting Thomases may well say, "Are we certain that the name was not chosen from the standard of sound money the world around instead of from the revolutionary general?"

I think the proof is plenary that our town of Sterling bears its name because of Lord Stirling. In the first place, that is the record of history. Peter Whitney, a minister of Northboro, wrote the first history of Worcester County. That history was published in 1793, twenty-two years after the naming of the town, and he says in that book—written so near the time of the naming of the town that it was quite possible for him to have talked with those who were present and knew—that the town was named for Lord Stirling.

In 1824 Isaac Goodwin, who was a lawyer of distinction, a historian and antiquarian, once a President of the American Antiquarian Society, and who was the author of perhaps the best history of Sterling, says that it was named for Lord Stirling. He, too, wrote within a period of time after the naming of the town when it was quite possible for him to have conversed with those who participated in the interesting event of naming the town.

Moses Sawyer, whom perhaps some of the older persons here present may remember, wrote a history of Sterling in the early part of the nineteenth century, still to be seen in manuscript, and he says that the town was named for Lord Stirling, the general of the revolution.

Other later historical authorities are to the same point.

There is tradition, too, that the motion by which the town received its name was made by Captain Benjamin Richardson—by the way, the great-great-grandfather of Elizabeth Butterick who has just uncovered to our view this portrait. She was appointed by the finger of fate as the girl to do the unveiling tonight, as well because of that relationship to the man who voiced the desire that the town bear the name of Sterling, as because she is a cousin of the donor of the portrait. There is a tradition that Captain Benjamin Richardson, who was then chairman of the selectmen of Lancaster, from whose territory our town was carved, made in public meeting the motion that the

new town be called for the nobleman general. Captain Richardson was a revolutionary soldier who won laurels on the field of battle. He enlisted from the town of Leicester. It is highly probable that he served in some of the armies which were commanded by Lord Stirling. It is a curious coincidence that Lord Stirling had a larger number of soldiers in the revolutionary war under his direct leadership than any other general. He commanded regiments or companies from every state of the original thirteen except South Carolina and Georgia. Therefore a large proportion of the New England troops as well as those from other parts of the country had the privilege of serving under him.

Tradition further tells us that Captain Richardson advocated naming the new town in honor of Lord Stirling because he not only served under that general but shared his tent during the hardships of campaign, and that his generous and courtly manners even in the trying experiences and privations of war completely captivated the heart and judgment of the hard-headed Worcester County captain.

You will see when you read the plate which is on the frame of this portrait that the first name is "William Alexander," followed by "Earl of Stirling." William Alexander was born by that name in New York in 1726, being the son of James Alexander. His father, who emigrated to this country from Scotland, was a

man of considerable learning, a mathematician, an astronomer, and after coming to these shores he studied law and became one of the first citizens of New York. He was a friend and associate of Benjamin Franklin, and with him founded the American Philosophical Society, which is one of the oldest, if not the oldest, learned society in America. This son was trained in the learning of his father, mathematics and astronomy, and early went into business. His mother was the widow Provoost. She conducted on her own account a very considerable commercial enterprise in New York even after she became Mrs. Alexander. Her son was active in her employ and subsequently became her partner. When the French and Indian War broke out in 1754

or thereabouts, he was appointed an aide to General Shirley, who commanded the British forces at that time against the French and Indians.

General Shirley was recalled to Great Britain in 1756 because of criticism of his conduct of the war, and was succeeded by Lord Amherst. When he returned to Great Britain, he took with him his aide, William Alexander, in order that the latter might assist him in the inquiry as to his military operations in America, which was conducted in London. Thus it came about that William Alexander went to London in 1756, and remained there until 1761. It had been common talk in the family before he left Scotland that the father, James Alexander, was the nearest heir to the earldom of Stirling. The last

direct male heir of that earldom died in 1739, so that the title, to be kept alive, must go to some collateral kindred. William Alexander was led by his friends in London to lay claim to the title. Therefore, he went to Edinburgh and took the first steps for establishing his claim to the earldom of Stirling.

Before I speak of that, it will be interesting to review the earldom of Stirling. The first Earl of Stirling was created by patents by King James the First in 1621, and renewed again about 1626, and by King Charles in 1633. William Alexander was the first Earl of Stirling. He was a man of diversified talents, of great ability and of tireless perseverance. Beside many other accomplishments he was a poet. A col-

lection of his verse was printed in 1637. To a few elegant copies intended for presentation there was prefixed his portrait executed by a celebrated engraver, William Marshall. It is curious that in the Latinized inscription around this the name is spelled "Sterlin."

He became a friend of King James the Sixth of Scotland, who was later James the First of England, chiefly because of his literary accomplishments. King James himself is most familiar to this generation in a literary way because his name is on the title page of the standard version of the Bible. He was very proud of his achievements in literature. Anybody who possessed literary talent gained easy access to the presence and friendship of the King. The William

Alexander of that day had talent as an author of no mean order. He was a prolific writer. He wrote many pretentious poems, one of which, it is said, suggested to John Milton the theme for "Paradise Lost." He was deeply interested in the colonization of America. He was fertile in schemes for the settlement of the new world, which he prosecuted with great vigor and persistence. At all events, for some or all of these accomplishments he became a great friend of King James the First, who invested him with the title of Earl of Stirling and Lord Lieutenant of Canada.

With the creation of that title went the most opulent grant of territory that ever sovereign conferred or undertook to confer upon a subject. It included the whole of Nova Scotia.

It comprised all of Maine lying between the Kennebec River and Nova Scotia. It embraced fifty leagues of the land on each side of the St. Lawrence River and on all sides of the Great Lakes. It even stretched around Long Island and adjacent islands, including probably Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard, which, according to the patent, were forever to be known as the Isle or Isles of Stirling.

That grant of land seems ridiculously extravagant in its extent, measured by modern conception, but doubtless it rather indicates the ignorance of the King and the Council and the statesmen of Great Britain as to the extent and wealth and geography of their American possessions. Nevertheless, William Alexander was created first Earl of Stirling

in 1621 with this princely grant of land in America. He was given that primarily because of his profound interest in the subject of colonization. Among other accompanying grants of power was that of creating baronets.

He spent large sums of money in fitting out two expeditions which undertook colonization in Nova Scotia and Maine in that part of the grant made to him.

It may seem odd that there never had been an Earl of Stirling before 1621. The city of Stirling in Scotland is almost the oldest city in that country. Nobody knows how early it was settled, or how early it was named. Its beginnings are lost in the mists of antiquity. Its magnificent hill was a natural fortress against all the methods of warfare of those

days. It was therefore one of the residences of the Kings of Scotland. I fancy that nobody could be the Earl of Stirling except the King until the time came when the King removed his residence from Stirling, which happened when King James succeeded to the throne of Great Britain. The first Earl of Stirling thus became invested with this grant of land, vastly exceeding in area the kingdom of his nativity. The enjoyment of it, however, was rendered hazardous because colonists of France sooner or later took possession of almost all of it except Long Island. The heirs of Stirling never enjoyed the practical benefits of it. Even the King never was able to change the name of "Long Island" to the "Isle of Stirling"—fortunately for us, perhaps, because we might not

have been able to take that name, if previously it had been attached to Long Island.

It was quite natural that anybody who thought he had a claim to the title of Earl of Stirling in 1756 should have undertaken to have established that claim. The possible reward of success was dazzling in its richness and sweep of power. Doubtless the main purpose of William Alexander in asserting his claim was the lands and jurisdiction in America which he conceived would devolve upon him with the title. He was no mere adventurer. He had acquired considerable property in his own right and by marriage with Sarah, the daughter of Philip Livingston. That claim was put forward by William Alexander, the American-born, on the

theory of Scottish law that the earldoms of Scotland descended only to and through the male heirs and in default of direct male heirs went to collateral male kindred; and while William Alexander, the subject of our consideration tonight, was not a direct descendant of the first Earl of Stirling, he was a direct descendant of an uncle of the first Earl of Stirling. He was represented by Alexander Wedderburn as chief counsel, who afterwards gained the highest professional distinction open to the bar of Great Britain by becoming Lord Chancellor under the name of Lord Loughborough. He succeeded in proving he was the nearest male relative in the line of male descent of the last occupant of the earldom. That was so decided by a jury convened

according to the forms of law in Edinburgh in 1759. It was called the Jury of Service. While I am not wise touching such matters, so far as I understand it, this was a somewhat peculiar proceeding. It is instituted in chancery and the precept is directed to a judge ordinary. The jury consists of fifteen persons who are sworn to act faithfully. The object of their inquiry is to ascertain whether the claimant is the lawful heir of the deceased peer. The verdict with a due account of the proceeding signed by the chancellor of the jury and by the judge, called the "retour", is filed and recorded in chancery. When these steps are completed in regular form the title is established. Leading men of the city of Edinburgh were summoned as jurors. The history

of the title and the evidence showing that William Alexander was the rightful heir to it under the law of Scotland were presented to such jury. That jury declared that William Alexander was Earl of Stirling, and that was one step—some claim the only step—at any rate an important and essential step—necessary to establish his title. William Alexander was advised, however, that he ought to apply to the King for a confirmation of his title to the earldom, and so, although he immediately assumed the title Earl of Stirling, he did make application to the King, by whom it was referred to the House of Lords. This course appears to have been taken through the urgency of his English friends but somewhat against his own judgment. There was considerable delay. Wil-

liam Alexander, now calling himself and being generally addressed as Earl of Stirling, after waiting two years returned to this country. Probably his return was hastened because of the death of his mother, which occurred in 1761. After he returned the House of Lords of Great Britain adopted a resolution that nobody claiming a title should use it until its validity was passed upon by that body. Then his claim was referred to some committee and it was allowed to lapse. So far as the records, which I have been able to discover show, nothing was done afterwards.

A change in the ministry followed soon after, the whigs who were personally and politically the friends of Stirling being displaced by the tories. The whig prime minister Bute was a

Scotchman and warmly attached to Stirling. Naturally his cause languished and was neglected after the retirement of so powerful a patron.

With true American spirit this man refused to abide by the direction of the House of Lords, that nobody should use a Scottish title until they had passed upon it, and he continued to use the title of Earl of Stirling, and was known ever after by that title. His position was that there was no other claimant to the title, that he had established his right to it according to the forms prescribed by the law of Scotland and had been acknowledged and treated in public and private for more than two years in England as lawful possessor of the earldom.

He returned to New York in 1761, and shortly afterward disposed of his business and established himself on a great estate at Baskenridge in the State of New Jersey where he built a residence befitting his rank as a nobleman of the Scottish House of Lords, and with an ample fortune maintained this great establishment until the war of the revolution broke out.

He was all the while an earnest believer in the growth of America. He was much interested in agriculture and corresponded with foreign persons who were wise in that subject. He was also much concerned in mining, and was diligent in promoting mining and manufacture. He was elected a member of the Council of New Jersey, an assistant to the Governor, Surveyor General of New Jersey, and

was active in public affairs as well as in these other ways to which I have alluded. There is every indication that in private affairs as well as in the general welfare he was a man of generous and enlighted views and sound judgment. It is interesting to note that he possessed sufficient skill in astronomy to make an observation of the transit of Venus in 1768, for the purpose of verifying the longitude of New York. A manuscript report of his observations of this transit of Venus is in the archives of the Historical Society of New York.

He was active in fostering many causes for enlightenment and education of his fellow countrymen. With five others he joined in a donation of "six hundred pounds to purchase books for the people," which was the

foundation of a public library in New York. He was for some years one of the governors of Kings College, now Columbia University. This institution was struggling with poverty and he made strong efforts to obtain from wealthy Englishmen an endowment to place it on a more secure footing. He formed the design of travelling to the west of our country for the purpose of making explorations and gathering information for the correction of the then existing maps.

When the war of the revolution reached the point of the battle of Concord and Lexington, he was elected colonel of the Regiment of New Jersey by the Legislature of New Jersey. He was severely reprimanded by the Royal Governor for accepting such a

commission, but he replied with spirit that he thought it the highest honor that could come to anybody to be asked to lead the soldiers of a people who were oppressed and were struggling for their freedom.

He undertook the duties of his office of colonel, and raised two regiments. Where the men were not able to equip themselves, he armed and clothed them out of his own private fortune.

Quite early in the revolution he led one expedition which stamped him as a man of enterprise and daring with observation and quickness to embrace opportunity. There was observed off New York harbor a British schooner unable to make the port, and she was supposed to be signaling for the aid of a British man-

of-war, which was at anchor in New York harbor. Thereupon Stirling seized a pilot boat, and with forty volunteers, armed only with rifles, set out to take this transport which was armed with six guns and laden with provisions. With this slender force and meagre equipment he captured the vessel and brought her into port at Perth Amboy in New Jersey as a prize. Thus was a soldier without the slightest pretensions as a sailor brought to the attention of the public at once as a man of resourcefulness and courage. For this bold feat he received a vote of thanks from the Continental Congress. He was immediately thereafter appointed brigadier general, and assigned to the defense of New York. He fortified New York and

built the forts Washington and Lee, which constituted our fortifications there during the revolution.

After the city of Boston was evacuated by the British, Washington came to New York, and the battle of Long Island was fought. The battle took place in what is now Prospect Park in Brooklyn, and General Stirling was in command of a body of troops which were sent to withstand the onrush of British soldiers in order to enable the rest of the American army to escape, it being greatly outnumbered by the British and in a perilous position. He was then confronted by a general named Grant who had been a member of Parliament and whom Lord Stirling during his stay in England had heard say in the House of Commons that with five thousand

men he would march from one end of the American continent to the other in spite of all opposition. When Stirling was confronted with this great body of superior troops commanded by this General Grant, he addressed his soldiers in this wise:

"Our enemy is commanded by General Grant, who has made his boast in my hearing that with five thousand men he would march from one end of the continent to the other; he has his five thousand men; he greatly outnumbers us, but he shall never proceed in his march farther than yonder mill-pond."

The spirit infused into a body of American soldiers by a speech of such vigor can readily be imagined.

Washington looked on from a distance and saw the battle, and was

deeply impressed with the valor and skill of Stirling in making the stand against the British and in holding out so long as to permit the American army to escape. His service on this occasion was of the highest value to the American cause. He was captured and was obliged to surrender at the end of this battle, but was soon after exchanged. He was appointed major general in February, 1777. He went with Washington to Pennsylvania, and there participated in the battle of Brandywine and in the battle of Germantown and then a year or two later commanded a division in the battle of Monmouth.

There is an interesting tribute to the soundness of judgment of Lord Stirling in the fact that he was appointed president of the court mar-

tial which tried General Lee for his treachery at the battle of Monmouth, and which brought in a verdict of guilty upon all the charges. He was also a member of the court of inquiry convened at Tappan in 1778 to consider the case of Major André. His advice on the prosecution of the war was frequently sought by Washington. He enjoyed the confidence of the commander in chief to an unusual degree. There could scarcely be more certain evidence of or higher tribute to the soundness of his military judgment.

One of the most important and valuable services rendered by Lord Stirling was the exposure and the consequent crushing of the so called "Conway cabal." During the winter of 1777-78 Generals Conway and

Mifflin with the active support and approval of General Gates planned to secure the dismissal of Washington and to have him superseded by General Gates, then wearing the fresh laurels of the victory at Saratoga and the surrender of Burgoyne. The scheme came to the attention of Lord Stirling through an aide of General Gates during a convivial hour. He immediately forwarded the information to Washington. The significance of this contribution to the cause of America hardly can be overestimated.

Thereafter Lord Stirling was sent to command the Northern Division of the army at Albany, a post of great importance because at that time there was another attack expected by way of Canada, and he was entrusted

with the duty of repulsing that attack.

I hold in my hand what seems to me an exceedingly interesting, if not a rather important, historical document. It is a manuscript letter written by Lord Stirling on his way to Albany to take command of this Northern Division. It is dated on the tenth day of September, 1781. The surrender of the army by Cornwallis occurred on the nineteenth of October, 1781, so this was from five to six weeks before the surrender of Cornwallis. It is directed to Governor Clinton of New York, and is dated at Peekskill which is on the Hudson. Of course, any letter signed by Lord Stirling is interesting. This seems to me to be especially valuable

because of the subject matter, which you will observe as it is read:

"Peeks Kill September 10, 1781

"Dear Sir:

"I have the satisfaction to assure you that Count DeGrass with 28 Sail of the Line arrived the 26th Ulto. in the Chasepeak Bay, and the next day landed 3000 men on the south side of James River in order to form a junction with the Marquiss La-Fayette. Lord Cornwallis was still at York, and his retreat either way, I think is completely cut off. Count DeGrass had taken a British Frigate, and his ships entering the River in Persuit of the Rest. General Washington's Van embarked at the head of Elk the 7th, the whole it was expected on board the 8th and I hope are by this time near the place of operation.

On his passage Count DeGrass took a packet from Charlestown on board of which was Lord Rawdon, & Revington acknowledges that That the Pegassus of 30 Guns & 5 Store Ships are taken by Admiral Barrass, who no doubt is arrived with his 8 Sail of the Line in Chasepeake also: The whole strength of the Enemy is 19 Sail of the Line at Sandy Hook. New York in the highest confusion. All the Troops embarking, for West Point or Philadelphia is the Word, but I think it more likely to be for Halifax.

"Twenty Six Sail of the Enemy's Vessels passed through the sound on Wednesday last, made their appearance off New London on Thursday, & returned towards New York on Friday. It is said they had about 2500 men on board under the com-

mand of DeLancy. The time is critical, every moment we may expect to hear of great events, & God Grant the Issue may be as favorable as the appearances seem to promise. I am happy in having an opportunity of sending your Excellency this intelligence

"& am Your Excellency's
"Most Obt. Servant,
"Stirling.

"His Excellency Govenr. Clinton
"Poughkepsie"

That letter has never been published as far as I have been able to discover and is of extreme significance in showing the completeness of touch which Lord Stirling kept upon all movements of the army, even if not

directly connected with his own command. It is of exceptional interest because of the number of people whose names are household words in connection with the revolution, which are mentioned—Lafayette, Count De Grasse, Cornwallis, General Washington and one or two others of lesser note.

That letter was written, according to its date, on the tenth of September, 1781. Lord Stirling proceeded to Albany to take command of the American forces there, and prepared with courage and ability to withstand the British attack which it was expected would be made through Lake Champlain and Lake George. But of course the surrender of Cornwallis put a wholly different face on the aspect of the revolutionary war. The

expected invasion from the north never materialized.

Lord Stirling died at Albany on January 15, 1783, in his fifty-seventh year. He was buried in a church, which was subsequently torn down, but his remains are now interred in a cemetery in the city of Albany. He left a widow and two daughters, Mary, the elder, who married Robert Watts, and Catharine, who married William Duer. Descendants of both these daughters are living in this country but of course his name is not preserved among his issue.

There were passed during his life two votes of thanks by Congress for his achievements in war—one for the capture of the transport to which reference has been made and another for an attack by which he captured a

considerable number of prisoners several years later; and then, on his death, Congress passed another resolve expressive of their appreciation of his distinguished service and his great valor, and the extraordinary loss which this country suffered in his early death.

The dash and courage and persistence of the true soldier were his. It has been said of him that he was "of fine presence and of the most martial appearance of any general in the army save Washington himself; was quick-witted, intelligent, far-seeing . . . his example was a perpetual source of strength and inspiration" among his troops.

Immediately after his death, in a letter to his widow, Washington wrote these words: "It only remains,

then, as a small but just tribute to the memory of Lord Stirling, to express how deeply I share the common affliction, on being deprived of the public and professional assistance, as well as the private friendship, of an officer of so high rank, with whom I had lived in the strictest habits of amity, and how much those military merits of his Lordship, which rendered him respected in his lifetime, are now regretted by the whole army."

No ordinary man could have drawn from Washington such a tribute.

These are the bald outlines of the life of Lord Stirling. He began the war of the revolution a man of great wealth according to the standards of those days. His possessions

were counted at over a hundred thousand pounds. He left nothing but debts at his death. He had expended his entire fortune for the liberation of America. He was unremittingly engaged in the military service of his country throughout the whole revolutionary war. It is the more remarkable that he should have embraced the cause of the colonists with such zeal and fervor and manifested such constancy of patriotism from the very beginning even to the end, because he was a peer of the House of Lords of Scotland and thereby had a right of election to the British House of Lords. He was allied by rank and family with powerful influences, with the noble houses of Great Britain; and if he had espoused the cause of the mother country, he would doubtless have been

treated with honor and affluence commensurate with the social weight and ability which he possessed. But he lived in America, he believed in American institutions; he was American born; he could be no other than a devotee of the American principles. His life is an example of the highest patriotism. Of course now even kings and kaisers and czars are at a discount. We smile in our republican simplicity at the desire of anybody to possess a title of nobility. But those who lived in these parts in 1750 to 1770 looked at the subject with a rather different eye. When the atmosphere of the country of that day is considered, when it is recalled that the colonists were loyal, that they did not begin to think of a final separation from the mother country until

the revolutionary war had actually begun—when we remember that sentiment of loyalty and have regard to the family associations and the social distinction in which Lord Stirling was reared and lived, it is cause for honor indeed that patriotism should have been the dominant motive of his life, and that he should have given his fortune and bared his breast and offered his life for the independence of his and our country. He is one of the characters of the revolution whose influence will always be an inspiration to the youth of the country.

And so we here in Sterling are under a special debt of gratitude that we are to possess this beautiful portrait, painted by an accomplished artist, to remind us of the name which

as a town we bear. In these days of photography, when almost everybody has a kodak, it is difficult to appreciate how hard it is to find a portrait of even a distinguished man who lived one hundred and fifty years ago. So far as it has been possible to discover, there are only three portraits of Lord Stirling. One is said to have been painted by West. It was in the possession of one of the descendants of Lord Stirling, Dr. Robert Watts, who recently died in NewYork. This represents Lord Stirling with a merry eye, a full and vigorous figure of about forty years of age, dressed in civilian's clothes.

There is also a miniature, which is painted by somebody whose name I have been unable to learn, and the precise location of whch I have been

unable to ascertain, but doubtless it is in the possession of some descendant of Lord Stirling.

The third portrait is the one on which this one upon the wall is based. That is in Independence Hall in Philadelphia. It was painted by an American artist of no great distinction, whose name was Bass Otis. Those of you who have visited Independence Hall know that it is full of portraits of men of revolutionary fame. Some years ago I inquired of the ancient keeper of Independence Hall if there was a portrait of William Alexander or Lord Stirling. He looked at me in a dreamy way and said, "Stirling — Alexander — who was he? Was he a signer or suthin'?" Of course, the Declaration of Independence having been signed in Inde-

pendence Hall, a signer of that immortal instrument is paramount in the minds of everybody there. But a search soon disclosed the fact that there was a portrait of Stirling in one of the rooms in the Hall. This portrait is in full military uniform of a major general of the revolutionary war. It is accurate, I believe, in every detail as to the uniform. You can judge of the character of the face as well as I. The artist is Miss Eleanor C. Bannister of Brooklyn, who in years gone by has not infrequently been the guest here in Sterling of the gracious donor of the portrait. We are under deep obligation to Miss Butterick for this new evidence of her wise interest in the welfare of the Town. As a Town we are fortunate indeed in such a friend.

Mr. Moderator and Friends of the Town, it has been a great pleasure to me to be privileged to participate in these services and to be able to present something of the life of Lord Stirling. I am afraid he is one with whom we of mature years have not been altogether familiar. Reviewing my own school days here, I am sure little attention was paid in the public schools to the life of Lord Stirling. This is a subject about which the school committee and the teachers of the future may well think a little more in detail than they have in the past.

As the generations rise and pass away the children of Sterling ought to be taught and to remember that the town has produced one great man, Chief Justice Mellen, whose

portrait hangs on this wall, and that Lord Stirling is another great man, whose name was given to the town and whose portrait we here dedicate in commemoration of his services to our country.

We are bound to realize that if "we are underlings," the reason is not because of the place in which we live, and that

> "The fault . . . is not in our stars
> But in ourselves."

We have a right to say, with Saint Paul, that we are citizens of no mean town.

AMERICA, THE BEAUTIFUL

(Chorus)

O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

O beautiful for pilgrim feet,
Whose stern, impassioned stress,
A thoroughfare for freedom beat
Across the wilderness!
America! America!
God mend thine every flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self-control,
Thy liberty in law!

O beautiful for glorious tale
  Of liberating strife,
When valiantly for man's avail,
  Men lavished precious life!
    America! America!
  May God thy gold refine,
Till all success be nobleness,
  And every gain divine!

Mr. John A. Davis: Mr. Moderator, I move that the Town of Sterling accept the portrait of Lord Stirling and tender its thorough appreciation of the generosity and thought that prompted the gift.

I think we are fortunate in having a friend who takes interest enough in this Town to decorate the hall with a portrait of Chief Justice Mellen and a portrait of Lord Stirling, and I hope it will be an inspiration to us to make the Town of Sterling worthy of its name.

Voted Unanimously That "the Town accepts the portrait of Lord Stirling with thorough appreciation of the thoughtful generosity which prompted the gift."

Rev. F. T. Crane: Mr. Moderator, I always have enjoyed the picture of one great man, and I think there is

nothing better fitted to add to the attractiveness of the Town Hall than good portraits that are appropriate to the place. We now have two good portraits, and we understand better than we did when we came here that the second one is also appropriate to the place, and I move that we extend a vote of thanks to Miss Butterick, and put it in this form:

Voted: That the thanks of the Town be extended to Miss Mary E. Butterick for the renewed expression of her interest and wisdom in promoting the welfare of the Town manifested by the presentation of the beautiful portrait of Lord Stirling; and that the Town Clerk send to Miss Butterick an attested copy of this vote.

This motion was adopted unanimously.

THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER

(Chorus)

Oh, say, can you see by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming,
Whose broad stripes and bright stars thro' the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watch'd were so gallantly streaming?

And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof thro' the night that our flag was still there!
Oh, say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave,
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave?

The Moderator: The meeting is now dissolved.

APPENDIX

Bibliography concerning Lord Stirling

The Life of William Alexander, Earl of Stirling, by his grandson, William Alexander Duer.

The Stone House at Gowanus, by Georgia Fraser.

History of the United States, by Bancroft.

The case of Alexander, Earl of Stirling and Dovan, by Thomas C. Banks.

Sir William Alexander and American Colonization, by Rev. Edmund F. Slafter.

The Stirling Peerage. Trial of Alexander Humphrys or Alexander, by William Turnbull.

Vindication of the Rights and Titles of Alexander, Earl of Stirling and Dovan. Parts I and II, by John L. Hayes.

House of Alexander, 2 vols., by Charles Rogers.

Major General the Earl of Stirling, by Ludwig Schumacher, which contains a full bibliography.

19 Princeton Review, 315 to 336.

LXIV North American Review, 435 to 459.

S0-DSF-096